

and the complex task of ground data processing and dissemination are also discussed. The illustrations provided are plentiful, relevant and clear, although it is a pity that the publishers were apparently unwilling to reproduce some of the computer images in their original, glorious (and helpful) technicolour.

Part 2 consists of a comprehensive compendium of past, current and planned satellite systems relevant to polar studies. It is remarkable in its thoroughness, and, combined with the lengthy bibliography associated with Part 1, provides a valuable source of reference material for the aficionado and novice alike. The volume is a must for all self-respecting glaciological and Remote Sensing research groups. However, the £39.50 price tag may limit its appeal to individual researchers and students. (Christopher Rapley, University College, London, Mullard Space Science Laboratory, Holmbury St Mary, RH5 6NT.)

SOUTHERN VOLCANOES

VOLCANOES OF THE ANTARCTIC PLATE AND SOUTHERN OCEANS. LeMasurier, W. E. and Thomson, J. W. (editors). 1990. Washington, American Geophysical Union (Antarctic Research Series 48). 487 p, illustrated, hard cover. ISBN 0-87590-172-7.

The Antarctic Research Series began in 1963 with funding from the US National Science Foundation. Its publications, now familiar to all who work in Antarctica, have maintained over the years a consistent standard of well-considered and superbly edited monographs and symposia, generally based on topics in which the US Antarctic effort is prominent, but including work by many foreign authors. This is just such a volume, presenting in the words of its editors '... a comprehensive overview of the south polar and subpolar volcanic provinces, and summary data on the status of knowledge of each volcano or volcano group'. It arose from a proposal put forward in 1978 by the Working Group on Antarctic Vulcanology of the International Association of Vulcanology and Chemistry of the Earth's Interior, to replace handsomely the 1960 Antarctic *Catalogue of Active Volcanoes*. The result, involving many active field-workers, is a personal triumph to all concerned in its production.

The work starts with a preface outlining the intentions and organization, defining terms and systems of approach. There follows an overview of Antarctic vulcanism by joint editor Wesley LeMasurier, drawing attention to Antarctica's several points of tectonic uniqueness. Well illustrated with maps and alkali/silica diagrams, this provides an overall guide to the area, its provinces and its volcanoes. In the main text seven sections cover the volcanic provinces of Antarctica and the subantarctic islands: the McMurdo group; Marie Byrd Land; Alexander Island, Palmer Land and Ellsworth Land; Graham Land and the South Shetlands; the South Sandwich Islands; Oceanic islands on the Antarctic plate (including isolated Gaussberg); Subantarctic volcanoes of the Pacific plate (the New Zealand southern islands and Macquarie Island). Each section is preceded by an overview, and made up of individual summaries of

volcanoes or volcanic groups numbering almost 100 in all. These, the work of 38 contributing authors, form the bulk of the book. Each section ends with its own bibliography, and the volume as a whole is rounded off with a solid index. A worthy contribution to an excellent series. (Bernard Stonehouse, Scott Polar Research Institute, University of Cambridge, Lensfield Road, Cambridge CB2 1ER.)

ICELAND IN DECLINE

NATURE AND POLICY IN ICELAND 1400–1800: AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF HISTORY AND MENTALITY. Hastrup, Kirsten. 1990. Oxford, Clarendon Press. 367 p, illustrated, hard cover. ISBN 0-19-827728-8. £35.00.

This remarkable book, based on fieldwork as well as on archival research, analyses the interaction between environment and epistemology at the utmost northern margin of Europe. Here the Arctic reduces a European system of production and its worldview to their most precarious. The picture given of this period is one of unremitting isolation and decline. The settlers from Scandinavia had brought with them an ideology which placed settled farming at the centre of their social system while despising and marginalising fishing. Yet the *bú* or free farming household had by now become associated with a low rate of marriage and exchange with other households. Thus there was a retreat from active engagement between social units.

This was matched by a retreat from engagement with the natural environment, as fences collapsed, fields were overrun and the wilderness expanded into inner social space. This inner social space represented permanence and social order. But while the *bú* retained its central role, more and more people were excluded from the ownership of land which it presumed, and thus from the realm of the fully human. Their own mobility and disorder made much of the population merge into the wild. So the Icelanders' sense of history split into two: in their external relations they shared in the processes of early modern Europe such as witch-hunting, trade and capitalism, while their internal sense of history is characterised by Hastrup as a Uchronia, analogous to Utopia, meaning a timelessness in which the heroic past was more vivid and powerful, more 'event-rich', than the present. The decreasingly representative ideal of the unmoving farmstead 'alienated the Icelanders from their own actual history — a history so full of fish and movement' (p.294)

At the beginning of the book, the author states her aim of contributing to the anthropological theory of change and dynamism in human society. It is impossible in a short review to do justice to the imagination, scholarship and rigour with which Hastrup pursues this aim, as she interweaves the discussion of culture, social experience, collective representations, causality and causation. Few studies set in the North have made a deep impression on professional anthropology at large. But this is historical anthropology at its best, a magnificent book which requires to be read both by anthropologists in general and by